

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MENOMINEE CASINO-HOTEL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

ES.1 FEDERAL ACTIONS

Applications by the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin (Tribe) to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) triggered the need for this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Federal actions requested by the Tribe are 1) that the BIA takes a 223± acre parcel in Kenosha, WI, into Federal trust, and 2) that the NIGC approve a gaming management contract for a tribal casino-hotel development at the 223± acre site.

ES.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose and need for taking the property into Federal trust and approving the development and management contract is to carry out the Federal government's trust responsibilities to the Tribe and to develop enterprises that would generate sustainable net economic revenues, that would in turn improve the long-term economic conditions of the Tribe and its members. Revenues generated from the economic development would be used to support social and educational programs for tribal members. The Proposed Action would promote economic development and the self-governance capability of the Tribe through the development of the Tribe's land.

Implementation of the Proposed Action would help meet the following objectives:

- Improve the socioeconomic status of the Tribe by providing a new revenue source that could be used to build a strong tribal government; improve existing tribal housing; provide new tribal housing; fund a variety of social, governmental, administrative, educational, health and welfare services to improve the quality of life of tribal members;
- Bring the health standards of the Tribe to that of the non-Native American population;
- Provide capital for other economic development and investment opportunities;
- Allow tribal members to become economically self-sufficient, thereby eventually removing tribal members from public-assistance programs; and
- Provide increased employment opportunities for tribal members.

ES.3 ALTERNATIVES

The EIS describes and analyzes four developmental alternatives and the No Action alternative. Alternatives have been selected which meet the “purpose and need” of the Tribe. Alternative A most closely meets the purposes and needs of the Tribe, and is therefore the Tribe’s Proposed Alternative.

Three of the development alternatives, A, B and D, involve placing the 223± acre Dairyland Greyhound Park (DGP) site into Federal trust status. One development alternative, Alternative C, involves expansion of the existing Menominee Casino-Bingo-Hotel facilities on the Menominee Reservation in Keshena, Wisconsin. The alternatives are briefly summarized below.

ALTERNATIVE A – PROPOSED CASINO AND HOTEL

Alternative A includes taking the 223± acre DGP property into trust for the Tribe, and the development of a casino-hotel complex, while retaining the current greyhound racetrack, structure, concourse and kennel facilities. Regional access to the project site would continue to be via Interstate 94 (I-94). State Trunk Highway 158 (52nd Street) would provide primary local access to the casino and 60th Street would provide emergency access. Future development includes a water park, a second hotel and an RV park. Interim Class III gaming would be conducted inside the existing clubhouse until the new casino is built.

ALTERNATIVE B – REDUCED INTENSITY ALTERNATIVE

Under this alternative, the 223± acre DGP property would be placed into Federal trust for the Tribe, and the facility’s current configuration would be maintained and operated as-is, with the addition of slot machines and table games inside the existing clubhouse. Remodeling would occur to facilitate the new gaming devices.

ALTERNATIVE C – KESHENA SITE ALTERNATIVE

The Keshena Site Alternative would be situated on the Menominee Reservation at Keshena, Wisconsin. Keshena is approximately 35 miles northwest of the City of Green Bay, Wisconsin. The Menominee Reservation is surrounded by Oconto, Shawano and Langlade Counties. The location of this alternative would be on the 17±-acre site of the existing gaming facilities and hotel on Highway 47/55, near the southern boundary of the reservation.

The current Menominee Casino-Bingo-Hotel facilities consist of a casino/bingo hall, hotel and restaurant. This alternative would entail the expansion of the existing gaming and hotel facilities.

This expansion would consist of demolishing most of the current casino, and replacing it with larger, permanent structures. In addition, the hotel would be expanded beyond its current size.

ALTERNATIVE D – HOTEL-CONFERENCE CENTER AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Alternative D includes placing the 223± acre DGP site into Federal trust status and the construction of a hotel-conference center and recreational development, in addition to the continued operation of the existing clubhouse, racetrack and kennels. The new facilities would include a hotel-conference center, water park, miniature golf facilities, gift shop, video arcade and food and beverage facilities.

ALTERNATIVE E – NO ACTION

Under the No Action Alternative the 223± acre DGP property would not be placed into Federal trust for the benefit of the Tribe, and would not be developed as described under Alternatives A, B, or D. The Tribe's existing facilities in Keshena would not be expanded. Land use jurisdiction of the DGP property would remain with the City of Kenosha. For the purposes of the environmental analysis in this EIS, it is assumed that the DGP property would continue to be utilized for greyhound racing, and that the Menominee Casino-Bingo-Hotel in Keshena would continue to operate in its current configuration. Under this alternative, the Tribe would not attain its basic objective of economic self-sufficiency.

ES.4 AREAS OF CONTROVERSY AND CONCLUSIONS

ALTERNATIVE A – PROPOSED CASINO AND HOTEL

Implementation of this alternative could introduce new competition with other tribal gaming operations in the region, particularly the Forrest County Potawatomi casino in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Alternative A also poses a potential impact to the local and regional traffic infrastructure by creating greater system demand. This increased traffic adds to the potential for impacts to local and regional air quality. Alternative A has the potential to increase gambling addiction and related problems to the Kenosha area, and would place additional demands on local public services, such as fire, police, social services, etc. For residents of nearby housing developments, potential noise and light impacts may be a concern. Although Alternative A would cause impacts in several areas, the Tribe, in part through an Intergovernmental Agreement, has agreed to mitigate those impacts. Alternative A would best meet the objectives of the project, and therefore it is the proposed alternative.

ALTERNATIVE B – REDUCED INTENSITY ALTERNATIVE

This alternative would cause similar impacts and controversy as Alternative A, although at a reduced scale. Alternative B would not generate as much net revenue, and thus not meet the Purpose and Need of the Tribe to the same degree as Alternative A, and it is therefore not the Tribe’s proposed alternative. Impacts from Alternative B would be slightly more intense than the No Action alternative, however all impacts could be reasonably mitigated.

ALTERNATIVE C – KESHENA SITE ALTERNATIVE

Alternative C would have no impacts in Kenosha, but would increase impacts at the existing Menominee reservation in Keshena. The site of Alternative C is located within habitat range for the Federally listed, endangered Karner Blue Butterfly. The development proposed under Alternative C could adversely impact this species. In addition, increased traffic and related safety issues could impact local schools close to the site of this alternative. Alternative C would not meet the basic objectives of the project because Keshena does not have a sufficient regional market to support a larger casino that would generate significantly higher revenues for the Tribe.

ALTERNATIVE D – HOTEL-CONFERENCE CENTER AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Like Alternatives A and B above, Alternative D poses a potential impact to the local and regional traffic infrastructure by creating greater system demand. In turn, Alternative D presents the potential for impacts to local and regional air quality resulting from the increased traffic. While this alternative avoids the controversy associated with competition to other regional gaming operations and the socioeconomic impacts related to gambling, it would not successfully address the objectives of the Tribe related to the generation of significant new revenues for the benefit of tribal members.

ALTERNATIVE E – NO ACTION

The No Action Alternative would not cause any significant environmental impacts, but would not meet the purposes and needs of the Tribe. Therefore, the No Action Alternative is not recommended.

ES.5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND SUMMARY MATRIX

The environmental consequences of the alternatives analyzed within the Draft EIS are summarized in **Table ES-1**. Mitigation measures have been identified where feasible to address specific effects regardless of whether they are considered “significant.” Mitigation measures identified in the design process have been incorporated into the project description. In addition,

measures have been identified to mitigate specific effects identified during the preparation of the Draft EIS. These measures are summarized in **Table ES-1** below. For a detailed discussion of environmental consequences, please see **Section 4.0** of this document.